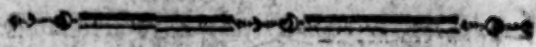
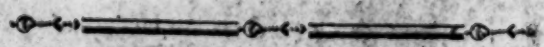


(8.)



AN
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL
INQUIRY
INTO THE
EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER
OF
SAINT GEORGE.



PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

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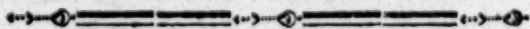
AN
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL
INQUIRY
INTO THE
EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER
OF
SAINT GEORGE,
PATRON OF ENGLAND,
OF THE ORDER OF THE GARTER,
AND OF
THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY;

IN WHICH THE ASSERTIONS OF
EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

History of Decline and Fall, cap. 23.

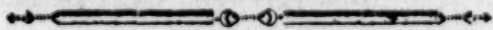
And of certain other modern WRITERS concerning this
SAINT are discussed;

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED
TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
GEORGE, EARL of LEICESTER,
PRESIDENT OF THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.



BY THE

Rev. J. Milner, F. S. A.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. DEBRET, opposite Burlington House,
Piccadilly; Messrs. ROBINSONS, Pater-noster Row;
COLLINS, Salisbury; and ROBINS, Winchester.

M DCCXCII.



AN
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL
INQUIRY
INTO THE
EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER
OF THE
ORDER OF THE GARTER
AND OF
THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

IN WHICH THE QUESTION OF
EDWARD GIBSON, ESQ.
HAS BEEN
ALSO OF CERTAIN OTHER ANTIQUARIAN WRITERS CONCERNING THE
ORDER OF THE GARTER
IS FULLY
IN A LETTER ADDRESSED
TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
GEORGE EARL OF LILFESTER
PRESIDENT OF THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

BY THE
Rev. J. Walker, B. D.

LONDON:
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1794.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

George, Earl of Leicester, &c.

MY LORD,

THAT fame is not, in the order of providence, any essential part of the reward of virtue, and that, in the performance of our duty, we ought to have a more noble and settled object in view than the esteem and applause of mankind, clearly follows from the diversity of opinions that has prevailed, in different ages and countries, concerning the same person or transaction. We find that death itself, which tempers the venom of envy, and chills the fervor of flattery, brings no assurance of our lives and actions meeting with their just verdict in this world: on the other hand, the decision, whether of fame or infamy, which seems to have been irrevocably passed by the the concurring voices of mankind, and which has been gaining strength during the revolution of centuries, is still subject to an ap-

B

peal,

peal, and ~~may perhaps be reversed~~ as precipitately as it was first passed. What a revolution has there not lately taken place, in the public opinion, concerning the two rival queens of our island in the sixteenth century? and how many of those sainted characters, who had remained, for ages, in the possession of more than mortal honors, were, about the same time, consigned to obloquy or oblivion?

With the merits and even the existence of a great part of the above-mentioned we, in the present day, of whatever religious persuasion we may be, have not, that I know of, any concern. But certainly it would be matter of regret to every Englishman, if the tutelary champion of his country, under whose auspices his ancestors had so often marched to victory;*

* The general cry of battle, under our Plantagenet kings, was, SAINT GEORGE; as St. DENNIS, the patron of France, was that of the French. See Cambden's Remains, p. 71. Hence our enchanting Bard speaking of his red cross knight, says,

—Thou Saint George shalt be,

Saint George of merry England the sign of victory.

Fairy Queen. B. 1. Cant. 10.

Hence also our victorious Henry V. is introduced with the utmost propriety, thus haranguing his soldiers, by our dramatic historian:

Follow your courage, and, upon the charge,

Cry, God for England, Harry, and Saint George.

if



if the name saint of his beloved sovereign, and of so many other illustrious personages, in whom he wishes to discover nothing but what may encrease his veneration; if, in short, the patron of his far-famed national chivalry, and of that society, which is instituted to watch over the history and antiquities of this island,* should prove to be a fictitious being, a mere non-entity, or, what is worse, should prove to have been one of the most wicked and infamous of mankind. Yet each of these charges has, in the two last ages, been confidently brought by men with sounding names; each of them has been repeated, in our own hearing, by writers of imposing credit, whose bold assertions, if not contradicted and refuted, it is easy to foresee, will pass for proofs with a public, too strongly disposed to make amends for the ready belief of their fore-fathers with a proportionable degree of incredulity.

Amongst those who are interested in the cause of our national champion, it evidently belongs to the learned society, which boasts of your Lordship for its president, to vindicate his memory, for the reason above assigned, as

* See the Royal Charter of Incorporation of the Ant. Soc.

likewise because their honor is, in a more special manner, connected with that of their celestial patron. In fact, should the name of George, like that of Judas, turn out to be a disgrace, instead of an ornament, still it may be urged in favour of those who bear it, that it was not their own choice, but imposed upon them: it may likewise be alledged, in favor of the Order of the Garter, that its tutelary saint was fixed upon in the twilight of the fourteenth century: but what excuse, in this supposition, can be made for the Antiquarian Society, which, under the meridian of literature and criticism, chose St. George for its patron, and thereby confirmed the antient predilection of the nation for its guardian saint? I fervently hope then, my Lord, that our society, for its own honour, no less than for that of its sovereign, of its nobility, and of the English nation, will never abandon the defence of its tutelary saint, until his cause and that of truth, which I trust, will never be the case, appear to be in opposition: for then with equal fervor, I wish that respect of no kind may influence our judgment or our pens: *Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas. Cic.*

The precipitate zeal which distinguished one branch of the reformation, and which destroyed

stroyed so many monuments of the art, learning and piety of the church militant in preceding ages, equally extended itself to the church triumphant. Amongst other celestial beings who were, without ceremony or enquiry, cashiered by the authoritative sentence of Calvin,* was our St. George, whom he boldly pronounced to be a bugbear or phantom. However in this, as in other rash attempts, he was resisted by the cool temper of the English Church, which continues down to the present day, to retain the name of St. George in her calendar and liturgy, and to inscribe it on her temples, while the nation, in general, concurs with the rest of Christendom in solemnizing his festival. It is true a few English and Lutheran divines were led astray by Calvin, one of whom, Martin Chemnitius, who has left behind him a huge tome of his controversies, asserts, in so many words, that St. George had no existence at all.†

In process of time the charge against St. George was shifted: his existence was no longer called in question,‡ but his character was quite reversed,

* Calvin Instit. cap. 10.

† In Exam: Frid: Sess: 25.

‡ This is to be understood in a qualified sense, if a late writer, in a periodical publication distinguished by the patronage

reversed, and, instead of being allowed a place in heaven, in quality of a meek martyr and holy saint, he was sentenced, by the voice of angry divines, "to hell as a bloody butcher of true Christians." * This theological censure would not however stand in need of a refutation at the present day, as in fact, it would have been as little known, as the works are in which it was originally fulminated; had it not been published and supported by some historians, who continue to give information to mankind. Amongst these Echard, without hesitation, and, as if he were possessed of the clearest evidence for all he advances, tells us, that "George, who had thrust himself into the bishopric of Alexandria, when St. Athanasius was expelled, was killed by the multitude. He was a good champion for the Arians, who charged Athanasius's patronage and performances of the learned, has grounds for insinuating that our military saint is still, by some persons, "confounded with fabulous and non-existing characters." See the Letter of F. A. S. in *Gent. Mag.* for January last, p. 13.

* See Dr. Primrose's Letter cited by Dr. Heylin's History of St. George, p. 1. c. 3. Who also brings Dr. Reynolds, Moulin, &c. as advocates for the opinion in question; to these may be added Jurieu, the antagonist of Bossuet.

" followers

"followers with his death, and placed him
 "in their calendar as a martyr; from whence
 "he crept insensibly into the Latin Church,
 "by whom he is esteemed as a saint and a
 "martyr, challenging the 23d day of April
 "for his festival. His legend is stuffed with
 "may ridiculous absurdities, amongst which
 "his fighting with the dragon on horseback, is
 "not the least remarkable. If the account which
 "the authors of those times, both christian
 "and heathen have left us, be true, we have
 "little reason to take him either for a martyr
 "or a saint. *

The celebrated Gibbon acts with more cau-
 tion, for though he gives, in his text, the same
 account of the strange metamorphosis of an
 episcopal persecutor into a military martyr,
 yet he informs us, in a note, that "this trans-
 "formation is not given as absolutely certain,
 "but only as extremely probable." † In the
 passage I refer to ‡ the historian, after giving
 an account of the birth, education and infam-
 ous life of George of Alexandria, before his
 usurpation of that patriarchal See, and of

* Roman History, Vol. 3. chap: 1.

† See Note 124, p. 404, Vol. 2. First Edit.

‡ PP. 402, 403, 404.

the extortions and violences he practised, when he had attained to that high situation, proceeds to state the dire effects of popular resentment against him, soon after the death of his protector Constantius. " The messenger who proclaimed at Alexandria the accession of Julian announced the downfall of the archbishop. George, with two of his obsequious ministers, Count Diadorus and Dracontius, master of the mint, were ignominiously dragged in chains to the public prison. At the end of twenty-four days the prison was forced open by the rage of a superstitious multitude, impatient of the tedious forms of judicial proceedings. The enemies of gods and men expired under their cruel insults; the lifeless bodies of the archbishop and his associates were carried in triumph through the streets, on the back of a camel, and the inactivity of the Athanasian party was esteemed a shining example of evangelical patience. The remains of these guilty wretches were thrown into the sea; and the popular leaders of the tumult declared their resolution to disappoint the devotion of the Christians, and to intercept the future honor of these *martyrs*, who had been punished, like their predecessors, by
 " the

“ the enemies of their religion. * The fears
 “ of the Pagans were just, and their precau-
 “ tions ineffectual. The meritorious death
 “ of the archbishop obliterated the memory of
 “ his life. The rival of Athanasius was dear
 “ and sacred to the Arians, and the seeming
 “ conversion of those sectaries introduced his
 “ worship into the Catholic Church. The odi-
 “ ous stranger, disguising every circumstance

* Here Mr. Gibbon gives his authority at length from his favorite author. “ *Cineres projecit in mare, id metuens, ut clamabat, ne collectis supremis, ædes illis exstruerent; ut reliquis, qui deviare a religione compulsi, pertulere cruciabiles pœnas, adusque gloriosam mortem, intemeratâ fide, progressi, & nunc martyres appellantur. Ammian. 22. 11.*” Epiphanius proves to the Arians that George was not a martyr.”—The obvious intent of the quotation here introduced, and of the interlineations in the text, and the note, is to induce the reader to believe, that in the opinion of the pagan writer Ammianus Marcellinus, the George and his companions, whose death he had been describing, were considered by his contemporary Christians as martyrs. In this supposition, it rests with Mr. Gibbon, to shew by what means George has dismissed his two attendants from the martyrology: and why, in no legend, either ancient or modern, we have ever heard of Diodorus or Dracontius. The fact is, Mr. Gibbon evidently mistakes the meaning of the passage he quotes; where the words “ *nunc martyres appellantur*,” refer to the former Christians who had suffered a glorious death, not to George and his companions.”

“ of time and place, assumed the mask of a
 “ martyr, a saint, and a christian hero; and
 “ the infamous George of Cappadocia has
 “ been transformed into the renowned St.
 “ George of England, the Patron of Arms, of
 “ Chivalry, and of the Garter.”

It is proper to begin with the first charge, which states our saint to be a mere phantom, or chimera; before we enter upon that which accuses him of having been an Arian persecutor. It is absurd to enquire into the merits of a character, until we have found some being to support it.

That there existed a martyr of the name of George, who suffered death for his Christian profession in one of the early persecutions, most probably in that of Dioclesian, at the beginning of the fourth century, cannot be denied, without incurring the censure of absolute historical scepticism. I lay no stress upon the supposed testimony of St. Ambrose, who, himself lived in the fourth century, in which our saint is called the *soldier of Christ*, because the work which contained this passage, as cited by different authors of the sixteenth century, * is not now mentioned by Dupin, Cave, &c. or the late editors of St. Ambrose's

* Lib. Præfat. quoted by Molanus, in his Notes on Ufuard, &c.

works, but it is certain at least, that our saint's name, as an acknowledged martyr of the orthodox Church, was famous in the following century, since in the celebrated council of seventy bishops, held at Rome in 494, under Gelasius, his acts are rejected, together with those of many other acknowledged saints, as the forgery of heretics.* We have other proofs of the public veneration paid to St. George; as to a renowned saint, in these early and enlightened times of christianity, so far even as to the raising of churches to his memory. In the genuine life of Theodore, of Siceon, Bishop of Anastasiopolis, † in his native province of Galatia, who was born about the beginning of the sixth century, we read that in his childhood, instead of returning home from school, he used to retire to a church of St. George, which appears even then to have been an ancient building, and to have been situated in an unfrequented place. Certain it is that Theodore's contemporary St. Gregory the Great, found somewhere in Italy or Sicily, a church dedicated to St. George, so far decayed, that he gave a parti-

* Bin. Concil. t. 2. also Decret. 1 Part Dist. 15, c. 3.

† Acta. Sanct. Bolland. Apr. tom. 3.

cular commission to the abbot of an adjoining abbey, to collect all the rents belonging to it, and to put it into a state of repair.* The sixth general council held in 552, twice makes mention of a particular church of St. George at Constantinople,† by way of distinction from others that bore the same name. In fact, there were five other churches of our martyr in that imperial city, one of which we know, ‡ which seems to have been a small one, was erected by the Emperor Maurice about 590, and the other by the tradition of the inhabitants was ascribed to Constantine the Great, § who is known, from the testimony of Eusebius, to have erected so many other churches to the apostles and martyrs. There were two other churches said to have been raised to the memory of our martyr by the first christian Emperor: one at Naples, || the other at, or near to Lydda, alias Diospolis, in Palestine. Here it was that St. George's body was supposed to be buried, and though William of Tyre, who, together with

* Lib. 19. Ep. 73. Ed. Nov.

† Του αγίου Γεωργίου εν τω ζεροκερκω.

‡ Ευκτιριον. Codin. Orig. C. P.

§ Codinus ibid apud Bol.

|| Joan Diac. ibid.

William of Malmſbury and Matthew Paris, vouches for the general opinion in this particular, at the time of the firſt Cruſade, aſcribes the edifice to Juſtinian*, who certainly built a church in honour to our martyr at Bizanes in Armenia,† yet this account is reconcileable with the common tradition, if the church of St. George in the *deſert of the Jordan*, which Procopius ſays Juſtinian *repaired*,‡ be the ſame with this, concerning the exact ſituation, which authors diſagree, but which it is almoſt certain ſtood in a ſequeſtered ſituation between Dioſpolis and Ramula,§ and not ſo re-

* Gul. Malm. L. 4. de geſt. Angl. Gul. Tyr de bel. ſac. l. 7.

† Procop. apud Tillem.

‡ Apud Baron. A. D. 530.

§ Some writers place this famous church, where our ſaint's body was ſuppoſed to reſt, and which was famous for the pilgrimages made to it, in the time of the Cruſades, at Dioſpolis or Lydda, while others deſcribe it as being at the adjoining town of Ramula, which was raiſed by the Latins to the dignity of a biſhopric under the name of Georgiopolis. But it ſeems certain that the church was in an open and defenceleſs ſituation, between both the towns, as the hiſtorians of the Cruſades concur in aſſerting that it was demolished by the Saracens, previously to the arrival of the chriſtian army into thoſe parts, leaſt the latter ſhould convert its beams into battering rams in beſieging Lydda. This famous church, Papebroke ſays, was rebuilt by our Richard I. who, like the other Cruſaders, fancied he was miraculoſly aſſiſted by St. George.

mote from the famous river of Palestine, as that it might not be described in the terms of Procopius. The veneration of our martyr must necessarily have been firmly established in the East, where he lived and was buried, before it could reach the West, and yet during the whole sixth century, and even before it, we have the most clear and authentic records of the respect paid to St. George, in the remote and independant provinces of France. Clotildis, who was married to Clovis, the conqueror of Gaul in 493, dedicated her church of Chelles to this Eastern martyr. * Gregory of Tours treats at large of the relics and miracles of St. George that were celebrated in France, in the sixth century. † About the same time SS. Germanus of Paris, Vedast of Arras, and Sidonius of Mentz, inscribed our Saint's name on the churches they built: the first of whom rendered his monastery at Paris famous, by endowing it with a portion of the relics of St. George, ‡ which he is said to have received from the Emperor Justinian: Whilst the erection of the last mentioned derived a more lasting fame from the pen of his

* Orig. Life in Bolland. June 3.

† L. de Glor. M. M.

‡ Aimon. ap. Bolland.

contemporary

contemporary, Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers. It would be an injustice to the reader to withhold this christian poet's celebrated epigram, which Baronius thinks contains the best and most authentic account of St. George extant, * and which shews the opinion entertained, by the learned of the sixth century, both of the existence and place of our Saint's sepulchre. I shall therefore transcribe it below. †

In the latter part of the seventh century we find Leo II. building a church in honor of our Saint, and of another military martyr, St. Sebastian, at Rome, ‡ which has continued under the name of St. George down to the present

* Baron. ad Rom. Martyr.

† Martyris egregii pollens micat aula Georgii,
Cujus in hunc mundum spargitur altus honor.
Carcere, cæde, fiti, vinclis, fame, frigore, flammis,
Confessus Christum, duxit ad astra Caput.
Qui virtute potens, Orientis in Axe Sepultus,
Ecce sub occiduo cardine præbet opem.
Ergo memento preces, & reddere vota viator;
Obtinet hic meritis quod petit alma fides.
Condidit Antistes Sidonius ista decentur :
Proficiant Animæ, quæ nova templa suæ.

‡ Anastasius Biblioth. apud Tillem & Bolland. Heylin, on the authority of Platina, says this church in *Velo aureo*,

was

present days, § about which time also Cunibert, king of the Lombards, built a church in honour of St. George on the field of battle, where he overcame the tyrant Alachis. In 750 we have authentic proofs of a head, or part of a head being found; in the Lateran Basilick, at Rome, by Pope Zachary, in a case, inscribed with Greek characters, testifying that it was the head of St. George. † This head, Tillemont informs us, was preserved in the aforesaid church, built by Leo II. untill 1600, when it was sent to the cathedral church of St. George at Ferrara, which is thought to be the same that was originally built by Cunibert. It is impossible to conceive a more pregnant proof of any person's existence at a past and distant period, than these edifices, erected in every part of the civilized world; to the memory and honor of St. George, furnish; and which have been perpetuated, in an uninterrupted succession, from that distant period down to the present day. They are the most authentic and durable of all monuments.

was built by Zachary. This learned writer is certainly mistaken where he transforms the tyrant *Alakis*, whom Cunibert overthrew, into a *barbarous people*. L. 2. c. 7.

† Baron. ut supra.

‡ Anast. Bib. apud. Papebroke, &c. Tillem. &c. Platina.

Bricks

Bricks and stones are not so easily put together, nor are they so easily altered and transposed as are written characters. I reason in a similar manner with respect to the public liturgy and calendars of the church, which I am going next to bring forward; and I maintain that, as to find admittance into these, must have depended upon the concurrence of a great many persons, and must have required the tacit approbation of a great many more, so where any name is found to have been of ancient date, and general reception in these ecclesiastical registers and sacramentaries, a more certain and more palpable evidence appears for the existence of the person, to whom such name refers, than if it occurred, in the pages of a few historians, subject to no control, and comparatively in the hands of a few.

To proceed now to the application of this remark; we find our Saint's name, and his festival fixed to the very day on which we celebrate it, in the martyrology of St. Jerom, in the very ancient *Ordo Romanus*, published by Fronto Duceus, and in the sacramentary or Missal collected by St. Gregory the Great; where it occurs with its proper preface or prayer, under the ecclesiastical title of the

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birth-day

birth-day of St. George *. We again find it in the martyrology of our venerable Bede, who flourished in the eighth century, and in that of Ufuard, who lived in the ninth, though both these Hagiographers, in celebrating, what they call, his illustrious martyrdom, reject his false history, which they well knew had been condemned in the Roman council. To the former of these centuries, that is to say, to the eighth, belongs that curious monument of antiquity, which the learned Stephen Antony Morcelli has, within these three or four years, brought to light, out of the collection of the late Cardinal Albani, who procured it from the East. I speak of the original menology or calendar of the church of Constantinople, which, though without a date, the learned editor proves, by intrinsic evidence, to have been drawn up before the beginning of the Iconoclast century, and consequently before the year 730. In this the 23d of April is marked as *sacred to the memory of the holy George*. He tells us that in another menology, that of Basil Porphyrogenet, of the tenth century, which he has seen in manuscript, in the Vatican, our Saint is

* Natale S. Georgii.

qualified with the title of the *great martyr* *, by which title, or else by that of the *commander* †, or the *victorious* ‡, he is generally described in the modern Greek calendars. If it be true, as Papebroke asserts §, that our Saint's name occurs, on the usual day, in a Saxon martyrology, extant in Bennet College, Cambridge, we have an additional proof, besides the testimony of Bede, that St. George was known and acknowledged as a martyr by our Saxon ancestors. Certain it is that on the coming in of the Normans, above twenty years before the first crusade, a parish church in Oxford was built in memory of St. George ||; as was the church of Windsor soon after this event ¶; though the second foundation of this most noble memorial of St. George, by Edward III. has not only eclipsed the former foundation, by Henry I. but almost obliterated its memory. The fame of our Saint was so much diffused by the Crusaders after their

* Αθλησις του αγιου μεγαλομαρτυρος Γεωργιου.

† Στρατηλατης.

‡ Τροπαιοθορος.

§ Act. Sanct. tom. 3. Ap.

|| Stephens's Dugdale, Vol. 3, p. 115.

¶ Vide Stow, ad an. 1350, also Dugdale, Vol. 1.

success in the battle of Antioch, which they ascribed to the assistance they conceived themselves to have miraculously received from him *, that, as Papebroke remarks, there was hardly a city, town or village in Christendom, in which a church of St. George was not to be met with.

Such is the successive deposition of mankind in past ages, testified in their most solemn and deliberate transactions, that there really existed such a personage as St. George the martyr. Such was the conviction of every individual in Christendom, for more than twelve hundred years, until Calvin arose; who told the world they had hitherto been deceived in a plain matter of fact, and that St. George was no

* Gul. Malm. L. 4, Gest. Ang. "Persuadebant sibi
"videre aliquos martyres, qui olim milites fuissent, qui-
"que, mortis prætio, parassent præmia vitæ, Georgium
"dico & Demetrium, vexillis levatis, à partibus monta-
"nis accurrere, jacula in hostes, in se auxilium vibra-
"tes. Nec dissimulandum ad fuisse martyres Christianis:
"sicut quondam Angelos Macchabæis, simili dum taxat
"causâ pugnantibus."

Mat. Paris, Hist. Ang. ad 1098. "Cum utrinque
"victoria fluctuaret incerta, ecce ab ipsis montibus visus
"est exercitus descendere invincibilis, cujus bellatores
"equis albis insidentes, vexilla in manibus candida præ-
"ferebant. Cognoverunt ergo Principes ex inspectione
"vexillorum, Sanctum Georgium S. Demetrium & S.
"Mercurium sua signa sequentes precedere."

more

more than a phantom; however in this, as in his other opinions, Calvin had soon a croud of followers. It is natural to suppose that so bold an assertion must have been supported by strong arguments, and that some reason must have been assigned why, so soon after the persecutions, in which the number of real existing martyrs, who suffered in the Christian cause, is allowed to have been astonishingly great, an imaginary martyr should have been invented to place at their head. I have sought in vain amongst these historical sceptics for an argument in support of their assertions, and can only guess at the pretence for their paradox, by their calling our Saint *an emblematical being, a legendary Saint, and a substitute for Perseus* *. Hence it is plain, that they identify St. George with the emblematical figure of an armed knight, combating with a winged serpent, which they have seen upon medals and in pictures, and with the legendary tales that have been built upon this emblem. But if this mode of reasoning were admitted, we might equally deny that there ever existed such a man as Romulus, the founder of Rome; since we scarce ever see him represented in

* Chamier, 1 tom. of Controv, cited by Heylin.

medals or sculpture, ancient or modern, but as an infant, who, with his twin brother, is sucking a wolf; and since his fabulous auguries and mysterious assumption to his father Quirinus, are repeated by his most enlightened historians *: we might in this supposition, consider the divine founder of Christianity, as an emblematical and fabulous being; since we find, by the figures still extant in the catacombs, that the most usual way of representing him in the first ages of the church, was in the character of a shepherd, with a sheep laid across his shoulders; and since most assuredly he and his apostles have been the subjects of as much fable as any personages whomsoever; for that every canon of the Roman council, which condemns as spurious the existing acts of St. George, in the fourth century, equally condemns, by name, a cart-load of forgeries relating to Christ, and the most eminent of his disciples and martyrs. This method of rejecting a history, *in toto*, because ignorance or malice may have foisted into it absurdities or errors, is I grant, a compendious way of solving all difficulties, and that by which men of superficial endowments

* Tit. Liv. L. 1, &c.

often endeavour to obtain credit, but it is unworthy the discerning critic and patient antiquary, whose aim is to discover truth, and whose labour is directed at separating fable from reality. Thus the very existence of the renowned British hero King Arthur is denied, on the score of the poetic flights of Welsh bards, and of the absurd narrations of Geoffery of Monmouth; notwithstanding that our first and best informed historians, who exposed these fictions, admit the hero's existence and merits, and only lament, that he should have been exhibited in the delusive colors of fiction, instead of the faithful light of history *.

On this head we must observe, what Calvin and the followers of his opinion were evidently ignorant of, that there has been a two-fold forgery of the acts of St. George, one of which took place at the distance of seven or eight centuries from the other. The first counterfeits came from the mint of the Arians, in the age subsequent to that in which our Saint suffered martyrdom. The latter bear the evident impression of the age of chivalry and romance, and were coined for the purpose of adapting to the vulgar taste and opinions the

* Gul. Malm. L. 1. Gest. Ang. Mat. Paris ad An. 1191.

emblematical figure of St. George and the dragon. The first forger, we are sure, existed before the year 494, whilst Baronius, a competent judge, expressly says that the latter was first admitted into history * by the famous author of the Golden Legend, who died in 1298. Now though the former acts, as we have said, are stuffed with falsehood no less than the latter; yet, it is to be observed, that in none of them is there a word about the Princess Sabra, or the Dragon of Silene, or about any other combat of our Saint, except that which he maintained against the mystical Serpent mentioned in the books of Genesis and Revelations †. It is true this legend being once set on, was soon adopted

* “ *Pictura illa St. Georgii, qua effingitur eques armatus, qui hastæ cupide draconem interficit, juxta quem etiam virgo posita manus supplices tendens, imploret auxilium, symboli potius quam historiæ alicujus, opinor esse expressam imaginem. In nullis enim, quæ recensuimus, S. Georgii actis antiquis quicquam ejusmodi legitur, sed à Jacobo de Voragine, absque aliquâ majorum auctoritate ea ad historiam referuntur.*” Bar. in notis ad Rom. Martyr.

† Gen. c. iii. v. 15. Rev. c. xii. v. 7. Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon. v. 9. the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

by

by other writers of equal judgment, and of the same turn of mind with Voragine; such as Hilarion, who belonged to the famous congregation of St. George de Alga; at Venice, Vincent of Blois, &c. though even some of the writers of this age and stamp, whilst they report the story of the dragon, express their doubts concerning its reality. If there are any persons now who consider as doubtful the existence of St. George, or who are inclined to rank him amongst fabulous and non-existing characters; by reason of the fables invented concerning him so many hundred years after his name and merits had been known and celebrated throughout all Christendom, such persons must evidently consider his existence as still more doubtful, since the last fabrication concerning St. George of our English legendary writers in the last century, namely, the author of the Seven Champion, the ballad writer in Dr. Percy *, and the allegorical Spenser †, who have ingeniously accommodated

* Reliques of Ancient Poetry, Vol. 3, p. 216:

† L. 1. Cant. 10. § 60.

And thou fair imp sprung out of English race;
However now accounted Elfin's son, &c.

dated to the prejudices of Englishmen the history of their Patron, by making him the son of Lord Albret of Coventry: and have conjured up as formidable a dragon on Dunsmore-heath, for the last display of our Champion's valour, as that is represented to have been which Voragine placed in the monster-breeding deserts of Lybria.

It is not necessary to trace the history of the well known emblem of St. George, which has had the strange effecting of making the Saint himself pass, in the opinion of some, for an emblematical being: such emblems having in general been the invention of ignorant painters and statuaries. Hence, it has been from time to time, the employment of many discerning and informed writers, to chastise the crude and ill-founded conceits of these artists. Nevertheless, as the subject is curious, and the emblem in question forms one of the most honorable badges of distinction in the world, my intention is to say a few words concerning it.

§ 65.

For, well I wot, thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kings, that have, with mighty hand,
And many bloody battles fought in place,
High rear'd their royal throne in Britane land.

At

At the time when our churches were tending to that highly ornamental style to which they afterwards attained, and when all those empty niches in our old cathedrals were filled with the statues of saints, and those bare walls were covered with their pictures, it is natural to suppose that the artists sought for certain appropriate emblems to distinguish one from another. These were sometimes well, and at other times ill chosen; they were frequently founded on real history, and as often on remote circumstances, absurd legends, or fanciful visions. Where there was any thing distinctive in the kind of death any of the martyrs suffered, it was common to represent him or her with the instrument of their martyrdom *. Sometimes allusions were made to the names of saints, in the emblems with which

* Thus St. Paul is known by his sword; St. Andrew, by a cross of Burgundy; St. James the less, by a club; St. Thomas, by a spear; St. Simeon, by a saw; St. Catharine, by a wheel armed with spikes. Thus also many martyrs who have been beheaded, were represented as bearing their heads in their hands: from which appearance a story has been framed of St. Dennis, and other martyrs walking, in this attitude, from the place of their execution to that of their burial.

they were furnished *, in which cases, and in others of a similar nature, popular tales were soon invented, and in process of time committed to writing, in order to convert such emblems into historical realities. It has even happened that these holy personages have sometimes been characterized merely by the profession or appearance of their clients or disciples †. But the grand storehouse of these emblematical representations, as it is natural to

* Hence, St. Agnes (*quasi Agna*) is always figured with a lamb; St. Lucy, or Lucia, (derived from *Lux*) with a dioptric glass of a certain fashion; and St. Christopher, (that is to say, one who carries Christ) is painted like a tall man, with the divine Infant on his shoulders.

† Thus St. James the great, from the frequent pilgrimages made to his church at Compostella, is himself habited as a pilgrim, with the staff in his hand, the esclop shell in his hat, &c. St. Antony, a famous solitary in Egypt, is represented with a book in his hand, and a pig, bearing a bell at its neck. This figure, as the learned Paquotius observes, was no way characteristic of the saint himself, though it certainly was of an order of Monks, under his name, in the middle ages, who were thought to be men of letters, and were famous for curing the epidemical disorder; which from this circumstance, has been called St. Antony's fire. Making great use of lard in their medicines, their pigs were privileged in Italy to feed in the common fields, cost free, and that they might be

to imagine, were the acts or histories of the saints, genuine or spurious, which were current amongst the people when these symbols were invented; in doing which their authors often discover very little judgment.*

To come now to the emblem of St. George, who is represented in fierce combat with a dragon; it is evident, this was drawn from certain passages in his spurious acts, which, though

be known, they wore a collar and bell. I shall mention one more transformation of this nature, which seems to be of late date, and of English invention. St. Blaise, bishop of Sebaste, and a martyr under Licinius, is in a thousand pictures and prints, to be seen in our clothing countries, habited as a modern English bishop in the act of combing wool; and he is devoutly believed and recorded to have been the inventor of the useful art of wool-combing. The fact is, his proper emblem is an iron comb; with which instrument he is said to have been tortured by his persecutors. The rest is easily imagined. But this single instance may serve to shew how easily an emblematical representation may be worked up into a pretended history.

* This may be instanced in the well known figure of St. Cecilia, who is considered as the Patroness of Musicians, and who is always represented as playing upon a wind organ, an instrument in her time not known. It is the remark of the learned writer quoted above, that musicians have been very unfortunate in the choice of their patronesses, no less than painters have been in their mode
of

though condemned by Galafius, and his council, and pointed out from time to time as apocryphal, yet being the only acts in existence, and containing wonderful narratives, could never be entirely suppressed, or deprived of their credit with the people. In these acts, though there is no mention of the combat which our Saint maintained against any corporeal dragon, there are frequent allusions to that spiritual victory which he gained over *that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan*, Rev. c. xii. v. 9. according to the figure and language of scripture. Thus, in the first legend of St. George, translated out of Simeon Metaphastes, an author of the tenth century, by Lippoman *, after an account of our martyrs being brought into the temple of Apollo, in order to join in the idolatrous sacrifice

of representing her, as in the only passage in her ancient acts, in which there is any mention of music, the saint appears rather to have slighted than admired it. "Cantantibus organis, Cæcilia in corde suo decantabat: fiat Domine cor meum immaculatum antequam." The musical instruments here spoken of, which are expressed by the generical name of *organa*, were prepared for Cecilia's intended nuptials, to which nuptials she was greatly averse.

* Vide, Sur. Vol. 2, p. 904.

there

there performed, and of his forcing the demon of the place to acknowledge his own weakness, and the power of the true God, by which miracle the imaginary Empress Alexandra is said to have been converted, and of his baffling all the arts and cruelty of his persecutors, it is added in the conclusion; "These are the trophies gained in the well-fought battles of this noble conqueror, these are his glorious achievements and combats against his enemies." But it is chiefly in an historical panegyric, built on these acts, and pronounced on the feast of St. George, in the seventh century, by Andrew of Crete, extant in the same collection *, and equally known, and popular with the acts themselves, that this mystical description of the spiritual battles and conquests of the "soldier of Christ," as the martyr George is every where called, is to be met with in the most ample form. Speaking of the conversions wrought by the sight of the patient sufferings of St. George, our author exclaims; "All these were rescued by him from the very jaws of the dragon. O the insatiable jaws of the devil;" and after much the same expressions, as those quoted above,

* Ibid. p. 917. Bolland, Vol. 3, Apr.

concerning the "spiritual trophies and spoils" gained by his victorious warrior," he adds, "George, whilst yet in the body, slew his incorporeal enemy," &c. These and such like passages, in the current legends and panegyrics of the times, must be allowed to have been more than sufficient for the artists who invented the different symbols of the saints, to represent our martyr under the striking figure of an armed warrior foiling, with his lance, a furious dragon. What confirms this explanation is that the emblem in question is not peculiar to St. George, but is attributed to several other martyrs, especially of the military order, who were celebrated for their constancy in suffering torments, and in overcoming various temptations of the spiritual enemy. Thus St. Theodore*, a young soldier in the army of Galerius, who suffered death for the faith at Amasea, and who was chosen the patron of the cathedral at Venice, is still seen on a column in St. Mark's place, subduing a dragon. The same is the established mode of exhibiting St. Victor, of Marseilles, another celebrated military martyr in

† Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century pronounced a panegyric on this martyr, extant in his works.

the persecution of Maximian. But we may carry the symbol in question much higher than the age, when it was first probably adapted to the several saints who now bear it. Eusebius, the historian and friend of the great Constantine, informs us *, that the latter, by way of celebrating his triumph over Satan, in the destruction of infidelity, caused himself to be painted in the attitude of "trampling on a dragon transfix'd through the belly, and plunged into the sea"; which picture, he tells us, was fixed on the portico of the imperial palace. We have the less reason to regret the loss of this illustration of the present subject, since

The medal, faithful to its charge of fame,
Through climes and ages bears each form and name.

POPE'S EP. TO ADDISON.

Baronius has published †, a medal in which the same subject occurs, though a little diversified. On the reverse of the head of Constantine, we see a serpent transfix'd through the body with the labarum, or military ensign, which he caused to be made in the shape of a

* Euseb. in vita Constant. L. 3. c. 3.

† Tom. 3. Annal. p. 575.

cross, having the monogram of Christ * fixed to the top of it. This I shall give beneath, together with another, in the same style, equally copied from Baronius, of the brave Majorian, who assumed the purple in 457. In this the Emperor bears the monogram on his left shoulder; and on the reverse, he is seen trampling on the mystical dragon, supported by a labarum, or cross, in his right hand, and bearing an image of victory in his left.

NUM. ÆR. ANG. BREV. ROMÆ.



NUM. AUR. LÆLII. PASQUAL. ROMÆ.



* See Zozomen. L. 1. c. 4. and Euseb. Vit. Conf. L. 2. c. 25. The monogram was composed of the initials of the name of Christ, a Greek K. and an R.

I have been the more diffuse in shewing the antiquity and general reception of this emblem of spiritual victory, as applicable to the figure of St. George's combat with the dragon, and which, in fact, has its foundation in the passages of scripture I have quoted *, in consequence of a late writers having roundly asserted, that the figure in question has no such allusion as that mentioned, and that the noble ensign of the Garter is neither "more
 " or less, than a charm or amulet borrowed
 " from some Eastern heretics; which was
 " originally worn as a protection from the
 " malignity of the air" †. The evident reason, why St. George was, in ancient times as well as latterly, almost always represented fighting the dragon on horseback, rather than on foot, is on account of those supposed visions of our martyr in the first and second Crusade, to which his celebrity, as the tutelary Saint of warriors, is chiefly owing, in both of which he is said to have appeared mounted on a white

* Gen. iii. 15, Rev. xii. 9.

† See Percy's Reliques, Vol. 3. p. 216, who cites a dissertation by Pettingall, which the author has not met with,

horse,* with his appropriate banner the red cross. The Greeks agree with the Latins in painting our sainted Hero on horseback: and that they did the same at an early period, may be gathered from a ridiculous story, told by Nicephorus Gregoras, and referred to by Baronius,† according to which a certain sound, like the neighing of a horse, which was heard in the palace at Constantinople, both in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was ascribed to the Equestrian statue of St. George which then stood before it.

In the opinion here laid down, namely, that the representation of our martyr's combat with the dragon was purely symbolical, from which the puerile story of latter legends has been modelled by Voragine and others, all judicious authors agree ‡. One or two of them however are of opinion, that the emblem in question was attributed to St. George, not on purpose,

* See the passage above quoted from Mat. Paris. Hist. Ang. p. 57, with respect to the supposed vision in the first Crusade, and Papebroke with respect to that in the expedition of Barbarossa.

† Not. ad. Martyrol.

‡ Baronius, Papebroke, Molanus, Tillemont, Heylin, Alban Butler, Paquotius, Morcelli, &c. The first mentioned of

purpose, but by accident, in consequence of the first Crusaders mistaking the figure of Constantine, in the attitude above described, at the church he erected over the sepulchre of St. George in Palestine, for that of the martyr himself *.

I hope, my Lord, I have sufficiently proved my first point, by adducing sufficient arguments in favor of the real existence of St. George, and demonstrating that he was not a mere imaginary and fabulous being. For, it

of these writers, speaking of the female figure which is sometimes introduced into the representation of St. George, and which has given occasion to the story of the Princess Sabra, says; “*In virgine illa, typum expriment, more majorum, provinciae vel civitatis alicujus, quæ adversus diaboli vires tanti martyris imploret auxilium.*”

* See Paquotius' Notes on *Historia SS. Imaginum* p. 279, who seems to adopt the opinion of a former professor in the University of Louvain, contained in the following passage. “*Narrat Eusebius Constantinum se jussisse pingi, ac tabulam exponi ante Palatium, qui draconem in mare dejiceret. Et hanc ipsam picturam Equitem qui draconem dejecit gerit ejus Equester ordo pro insigni. Ea scilicet imago est, quam in expeditione cruciata majores nostri visam, in Ecclesia S. Georgii in Palestina pro imagine hujus martyris acceperunt; cum esset imago Constantini qui Ecclesiam istam fundaverat & apud Græcos & Orientales inter Sanctos colitur.*”

has

has been shewn, that this holy martyr was not only known, but that he was celebrated and venerated with religious honors, both by the Eastern and Western churches, during the space of above seven hundred years, before that fabulous history of him was invented, on which those rest their opinion who deny the reality of his existence; and that, it required a progression of three centuries more towards the times of scepticism to produce a man bold and paradoxical enough to dismiss to the region of chimæras, one of the most celebrated characters of Christianity. Still, however, I shall have done very little for the credit of St. George, and of those illustrious and respectable personages, whose credit, to a certain point, is embarked in the same bottom with his, if, after having vindicated his existence, I am not able to justify his character. Indeed, it were far better for ourselves, as well as for our patron, that he never had existed at all, than that he should have been such a monster of wickedness, as was the infamous tyrant of his name, who usurped the See of Alexandria, with whom Reynolds, Jurieau, Echard and Gibbon confound him. In the latter of these historians may be seen some traits of the character of this Arian persecutor; namely, the male-

malepractices and infamy of his secular life, the scandalous monopolies of salt, nitre, paper, funerals, &c. which he exercised in that celebrated Emporium, after his invasion of the Chair of Athanasius, and the violent death he suffered from a seditious, but oppressed populace. This author, however, has not described the scourges and the fires with which he caused the orthodox party of both sexes, to be tortured and put to death, merely for their refusing to join with him in religious worship. Such was the man, Mr. Gibbon would have us believe, whose feast the nation celebrates, and whose patronage its sovereign, its nobles, and its learned men glory in. Let us first examine upon what grounds this charge rests, and after the negative proof of our martyr's innocence, that will arise from demonstrating their fallaciousness, I shall then proceed to others of a more positive nature.

The first and principal argument of my opponents is drawn from the ancient acts of St. George, in which there are certain remote allusions to the history of the Arian persecutor, particularly in what is said of his combats with the magician Athanasius, and of his raising up to life the Empress Alexandra. From Baronius's account of these ancient acts, which
he

he says he discovered in the vatican, there is no reason to doubt of their being the very same which the Bollandists, have since published from Greek manuscripts in the libraries at Venice, Florence, and Rome, and of their being the original materials from which the different accounts of Metaphrastes, extant in Surius, were taken, so early as the ninth or tenth century. In all these different acts, histories, and panegyrics, I am ready to grant Mr. Gibbon, what he contends for, that "through a cloud of fiction we may yet discover" an allusion to the history of the Arian tyrant. Hence, if the cause of St. George were to be determined by his ancient acts in the fifth age, I should be as ready to give up the defence of his sanctity; as I should be to abandon that of his existence, were the latter question to be decided by the more modern forgery of the thirteenth century. But I maintain that the merits of Saint George, as an orthodox martyr, depend on the testimony of the churches, both in the East and in the West, which have inscribed his name in their calendars, as that of a martyr of the first order, and have testified their public veneration to him on their edifices and in their liturgy. For her calendars, her public veneration and her liturgy, the church
is

is answerable, particularly with respect to the more distinguished saints, as St. George was; over these she watches with jealous attention; but it is not in her power, nor does she profess, however much it is her wish, to preserve the entire and unadulterated history of all the saints she acknowledges. In short, to speak of St. George, so far from any stress being laid upon his acts, that on the contrary, they were formally condemned as early as 494, by Gelasius, at the head of seventy other bishops, as the composition of heretics. I shall give the passage itself alluded to below *, of which mention has already been made more than

* “ Quis ita esse Catholicorum dubitet, & majora eos
 “ (martyres) in agonibus fuisse perpeffos, nec suis viribus,
 “ sed gratiâ Dei & adjutorio, universa tolerasse? Sed ideo
 “ secundum antiquam consuetudinem, singulari cautela,
 “ in S. R. Ecclesia non leguntur, quia et eorum, qui
 “ conscripseré nomina penitus ignorantur, & ab infideli-
 “ bus aut ideotis superflua; aut minus apta; quam rei
 “ ordo fuerit, scripta esse putantur; sicut cujusdam Cyrici
 “ & Julittæ: sicut Georgii, aliorumque, hujus modi passi-
 “ ones, quæ ab hæreticis perhibentur conscriptæ, propter
 “ quod, ut dictum est, ne vel levis subsannandi oriretur
 “ occasio, in S. R. Ecclesia non leguntur. Nos tamen
 “ cum prædicta Ecclesia omnes martyres, & eorum glori-
 “ osos agones, qui Deo magis quam hominibus noti sunt
 “ omni devotione veneramur.”

once, and I have only to add, that the canon in question, which contains a list of genuine and apocryphal works, has perhaps been more frequently referred to, than any other upon record; and that the condemnation of St. George's acts, in particular, has since been noticed, in different ages, by the most celebrated writers of their times; such as Bede, in the eighth century, Ufuard in the ninth, Vincent of Blois in the thirteenth, Volaterranus in the fifteenth, &c. In conformity with this decree, the Roman Church, neither in her ancient office book, nor in the modern one published by Urban the Eighth, has inserted any particular lessons for the festival of St. George, in the second Nocturn of Matins, which is generally composed of such acts; though in other particular breviaries, as in that of Sarum, a certain brief account of our martyr is to be met with, which seems to have been borrowed from his ancient spurious history.

It may seem extraordinary that there should neither now be, nor have been, in 494, any genuine acts of St. George, to oppose to these spurious acts. But this circumstance is common to our Saint, with many others of the most famous apostles and martyrs. It is true, that even in the times of persecution, proper persons

persons were appointed to collect the acts of the martyrs, and great sums were paid for copies of their interrogatories or trials, which were always taken down in short-hand, by clerks appointed for this purpose in the Roman courts *: but then, we are to remember, that the fury of the several persecutions raged still more furiously against the writings, than against the persons of the Christians: no one is ignorant of the famous class of penitents called *Traditores*, in the ancient church, who purchased their personal safety by surrendering the sacred writings in their hands. Now it might easily happen that the only copies extant of the real acts of the most edifying and celebrated martyrs might, in these circumstances, be destroyed, without either effacing the memory or the veneration of the martyrs themselves from the minds of the faithful, or their names from the martyrologies of their own and the neighbouring churches †. The learned Morcelli suggests another method of accounting

* Baron. Annal. ad An. 290. Fleury's Manners of Christians, c. 20.

† The elegant Prudentius, in the sixth century, laments the success of the persecutors in sometimes getting possession of the acts of the martyrs in the following passage.

accounting for this deficiency, viz. the artifices of some persons in forging, and the credulity of others in admitting false histories, which being generally of a more splendid and amusing nature than the genuine acts, brought the latter into contempt and oblivion with the people. How early the practice of forging spurious acts of saints began, we may gather from Tertullian, who says, that St. John the Evangelist deposed a certain priest in lesser Asia, for inventing a false history of St. Paul *; and that the same thing was sometimes practised by heretics, in order to bring the names of the most illustrious saints into contempt, we gather from the sixth general council †.

But whilst, in conjunction with all the learned critics and ecclesiastical historians of the two last centuries, I give up, as spurious, all the existing histories and acts of St. George, I am

O Vetustatis silentis obsoleta oblivio !
 Invidentur ista nobis, fama & ipsa extinguitur.
 Chartulas blasphemus olim nam satelles abstulit ;
 Ne tenacibus libellis erudita sæcula
 Ordinem, tempus, modumque passionis proditum
 Dulcibus linguis per aures posterorum spargerent.

* L. de Bapt.

† Can. 63.

far

far from supposing that all the particulars which are contained in them are false, or that the fiction in question, unlike other fables, had not its foundation in truth. There is evidently no certain way of separating truth from falsehood in the present instance; nevertheless, if I were forced to give my opinion, which were the genuine stamina of truth in the midst of the mass of error before us, and to point out the circumstances which seems to be admitted by the generality of sober critics, and are supported, in some degree, by immemorial tradition, I should say that St. George was a Cappadocian of noble birth, who, embracing the profession of arms, resided for some time, in Palestine; but being at Nicomedia, the imperial residence, at the breaking out of the persecution of Dioclesian and Galerius, he was one of those noble personages who renounced their preferment *, as Eusebius relates, that he suffered a cruel death, for the faith, with the most heroic constancy, and that his remains were afterwards removed

* L. 8. Papebroke from certain circumstances ingeniously combined together conjectures, that St. George was the noble youth, who, as Eusebius and Lactantius mention, tore down the first edict of Dioclesian for persecuting the Christians.

to Palestine, where Constantine, soon after, erected that church over them, which Justinian repaired, and the Saracens laid in ruins, but which was rebuilt by our Coeur de Lion.

I have been able to discover but one more pretence for confounding our martyr with the infamous usurper of Alexandria, which is the identity of their name and country, a circumstance which Mr. Gibbon seems to dwell upon with singular satisfaction: as if the vast and populous country of Cappadocia were incapable of producing two persons of the name of George at different periods! In the first place then, though it is probable our martyr was a native of Cappadocia, it is not certain that he was so. This designation, which does not occur in the most ancient and authentic records, may have been borrowed from his false acts, in latter times, and he may have been so described in the foundation of the church of Windsor and elsewhere, to distinguish him from another St. George, a martyr in Bulgaria; all this, I say, may be admitted, without giving any real advantage to my opponents. What is certain, on the other hand, is that, by the testimony of Ammianus, the Arian George himself was not a native of Cappadocia, but of Epiphania in Cilicia. It
deserves

deserves our notice, that this name of George, which now is, and for many ages, has been so popular, and which undoubtedly first became so from its having been illustrated by some distinguished and respected personage, first began to be common about the supposed time of our Saint's martyrdom; whereas George of Alexandria, who must have been born much about that time, had three contemporaries of distinction, that we know of, much about his own age, who bore the same name. One of these was the famous Semi-Arian George, bishop of Loadicea, who, like his name-fake of Alexandria, was a persecutor of St. Athanasius; another was George a priest of Arethusa, the third was a secular person of the name of George, whom Julian, the Emperor, mentions as one of the receivers of his revenues.* In the life of Theodore of Siceon, mentioned above, I have found another George, surnamed the Cappadocian, who being a person of distinction, and accused of high treason, prevailed upon the guards who were conducting him to the Emperor Phocas, to permit him to call upon Theodore in his way.

* Julian Ep. 8. apud Tillem. Hist. Emp. Vol. 4, p. 571.

Such are the grounds of the charge against the memory of our martyr, and the only pretences that have been yet made for confounding together two opposite characters, who had nothing in common but their name. I shall now point out some distinguishing features between them, which were evident and notorious to the whole world.

The most prominent of these was the opposition of their religious professions. George, the tyrant of Alexandria, was the ringleader of the Arian heretics, whereas the saint, who claimed such distinguished honors from the orthodox faithful, at the time when the Arian controversy raged with the greatest violence, must himself have been an orthodox Christian, or, at any rate, could not have been a noted Arian. Every one, who is acquainted with church history, knows the extreme horror which the orthodox Christians entertained for a doctrine, which removed the corner-stone of revelation, and the extreme detestation in which George of Alexandria, in particular, was held by them, in consequence of his having seized on the chair of their champion Athanasius, and having even tortured to death their brethren, for refusing to join with him in religious worship. We may as well then
suppose,

suppose, that "the seeming conversion of these "sectaries" which Mr. Gibbon talks of without any warrant whatsoever, might have introduced the worship of Arius himself into the bosom of the Catholic Church, as that of the more infamous and odious George of Alexandria. "If," as this author alledges, "the "rival of Athanasius was dear and sacred to "the Arians," was the founder of their religion, Arius, less dear or less sacred to them? and were not both of them, in the same degree, infamous and hateful in the eyes of the Catholics? Our sarcastic historian, is, for once, so charitable to the orthodox cause as to suppose, that whilst the Arians remembered their friend, the Catholics forgot their enemy, and permitted "this odious stranger to assume "amongst them the mask of a martyr and a "saint," and yet in a note, which is at the foot of this very passage, he tells us that the famous champion of orthodoxy, St. Epiphanius, Archbishop of Salamis, who died in the fifth century, when the veneration of our Saint was widely spread, "proves to the Arians that "George (of Alexandria) was not a martyr." In fact, this famous Biographer applies to him that passage, 1 Peter, c. ii. *Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief, &c.* and he stily main-

saints, that the Arian bishop was murdered, not for confessing the faith, but for his tyranny and exactions, the instances of which he enumerates. Nor was it only in the writings of those celebrated doctors, Epiphanius and Athanasius, but likewise in those of the whole tribe of church historians, that the memory of the Arian George was gibbeted, for the execration of succeeding ages. It is impossible then to conceive a greater absurdity than that the vanquished Arians should have persuaded the victorious Catholics to inscribe the name of the notorious enemy of St. Athanasius in their calendars, and on their temples; at the same time, no supposition is more natural than that, in which all judicious writers concur, and which Gelasius and his seventy bishops, warranted in the fifth century, namely, that certain Arians, by corrupting the history of a celebrated orthodox martyr, of the name of George, and artfully blending with it certain remote allusions to their champion of the same name, should endeavour to invest the latter with rays stolen from the former. Had not the name of George been previously bore by some favorite orthodox saint, the conduct of the Arian George would evidently have made it as odious in the church as that of Arius himself.

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In the second place, the Christians of all ages have clearly distinguished between the orthodox and the Arian George, by their very different professions of life; the former they have always considered as an edifying military man; whilst the latter they knew to have been a scandalous bishop. The latter of these assertions will not be called in question: now, with respect to the former, we are to observe that in all the martyrologies, histories, and other accounts of saints, ancient and modern, it has always been the practice, as well with respect to the martyrs, as to the other saints, to add their distinctive title or profession, especially if they belonged to the episcopal order, and the memories of such have been particularly kept up and venerated in the particular Sees which they governed. But no such epithet, as that of bishop, was ever attributed to St. George in any menology, calendar or history whatsoever; but his name every where occurs under the simple denomination of a *martyr*, which satisfactorily proves that he never was any ecclesiastic at all, but a mere layman. On the other hand, the church of Alexandria never paid any special veneration to the name of its pretended patriarch, or seemed at all conscious of having added so

illustrious a name, as that of St. George, to the calendar of saints. In the genuine life of St. Theodore, bishop of Anaftasiopolis, in the sixth century, to which I have so often referred, mention is made of several visions or apparitions of St. George, which Theodore and others were supposed to have seen: now in these, it is distinctly related, that our martyr appeared, as a youth of elegant figure and of great beauty, with flowing golden locks, and armed with his proper weapon, a sword, instead of shewing episcopal ornaments, or advanced age: and it is moreover particularly noticed that his appearance was such, as his usual representation was in the pictures of him, that were known at that early period. It will readily occur that I do not lay any stress on the authority of these visions, but only relate them as evidence of the idea that was entertained of the age and profession of St. George, and of the manner of painting him, that prevailed as early as the beginning of the sixth age of Christianity. In the martyrology of Usuard our Saint is styled the *glorious Standard bearer*:* in the Greek menologies as we have seen, he is generally called either

* Antesignanus,

the *Commander*, or the *Conqueror*; and in an ancient Roman ritual, of the age of Charlemagne, there is a particular service for arming a knight to protect the church, in which he is recommended to the prayers of St. George, and of those other acknowledged military saints, Maurice and Sebastian. It was in consequence of the firm persuasion of St. George having been a military man, and of his having afforded help to the christian warriors, in the three first crusades against the infidels, that, when other professions chose their celestial patron, he was chosen the patron of soldiers; and it was owing to the martial spirit of this nation that our ancestors fixed on him for their tutelary Saint. Papebroke thinks this was first done by our warlike Richard I. who, like the former Crusaders, boasted of having been favored with the vision of St. George, at the siege of Acon in Palestine, and who also is reported by Cambden and others, to have laid the plan if he did not execute it, of the noble Order of the Garter*. What renders it probable that St. George had already been chosen the national Patron, is that in a national council held at Oxford in 1222.

* See Papebroke and Cambden, on Berkshire.

the feast of St. George was raised to the rank of a second rate holiday, or double of the second class. We know how much the veneration of St. George was propagated by the victorious Edward III. But it was not till the reign of the second conqueror of France, Henry V. that St. George's day was ranked by Archbishop Chichele in 1415, with the first solemnities of the year *; though Archbishop Arundell and Henry IV. had taken some steps towards the accomplishment of this measure. We are to observe that other kingdoms and states, as Arragon, Genoa, and Malta contended with England, in the honor of having St. George for their Patron, and that in other countries besides this, as in Austria, Italy and Greece, military orders have been instituted under his tutelage. But the rays of these orders were, even at those times, entirely lost in the superior lustre of the English Knights of St. George, or of the Garter.

I shall mention one more glaring circumstance, which shews that the orthodox Christians of early, as well as of later times, clearly distinguished the martyr whom they venerated from the Arian persecutor, whose rage their

* Gibson, Councils, &c. T. 1. p. 28.

their brethren, and above all St. Athanasius had so severely felt. Ammianus, together with all the church writers and historians, from Socrates * down to Nicephoras Calistus, † informs us, that after George of Alexandria had been murdered by the Pagan multitude, not without the connivance, Mr. Gibbon would have us believe, of the orthodox party, his body was burnt to ashes, (some historians add, that the very camel which carried his carcase to the pile was burnt with him,) and these ashes were collected, with jealous care, and thrown into the sea, lest they should be carried away by his partisans. This transaction was notorious to the whole world, having taken place on its most public theatre, the great Emporium of Alexandria; the memory of which has been perpetuated down to the present day, by all the principal writers who have related the events of that period. On the other hand, the George, who was the object of public veneration in the fifth, sixth, and succeeding centuries was a martyr, whose sepulchre was well known in countries the most remote from that where it

* L. 3. c. 2.

† L. 10. c. 6.

was placed*; and whose relicks were thought by those, who were best acquainted with church history, and who lived at no remote period from the catastrophe above-mentioned, no less than by the people in general, to be dispersed in different parts. Æmillian, bishop of Germij, in the sixth age, was persuaded he had particles of our Saint's head and arm †, which he bestowed upon his neighbouring bishop of the same province, Theodore. Gregory of Tours, as we have seen above, speaks of his relicks as existing in different parts of Gaul, about the same period; one of which was supposed to have been brought from Constantinople by the illustrious bishop of Paris, St. Germanus. We have also heard of the supposed head of St. George being found at Rome in the eighth century, and of the general opinion, in the eleventh, that the remainder of his body rested at the famous church of St. George in Palestine. I am not here contending for the authenticity of these relicks, I am only drawing an argument for the diversity of the two Georges, whom Mr. Gibbon

* "Qui virtute potens, orientis in Axe sepultus." *Vent. Fort. ut supra.*

† Surius. T. 2. p. 857.

confounds

confounds together, from the opinions and practices of the earliest and best informed ages. It was impossible they should not distinguish that George, whose sepulchre they described, and whose head, arms and body they conceived themselves to be possessed of, from another person of the same name, whose ashes, mingled with those of other men and beasts, they knew had been scattered over the Mediterranean waves.

I hope, my Lord, I have brought sufficient proofs of the two points I set out with advancing, first, that St. George the martyr is not an imaginary being, secondly, that he was not the infamous bishop of the same name, who, in the middle of the fourth age, usurped the See of Alexandria: I am sure I have destroyed the foundations on which the opposite opinions rest. I might have swelled this little dissertation to a more respectable size; had I, like my predecessor in the vindication of St. George, Dr. Heylin, brought forward every thing I had met with concerning the subject of this inquiry; and enlarged on every curious subject that was incidentally mentioned. I might also have been thought to have enlivened a dry subject, and to have produ-

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ced a sufficient claim to the title of a philosopher, had I scattered through it a few spices of fashionable incredulity, and descanted on the folly of our ancestors, who cannot rise to defend their own cause, and seldom now meet with an advocate to speak for them. However, if I have not consulted the taste of the times in the latter instance, I have endeavoured to make amends for it in the former: if I have been dull, I have tried not to be tedious. It would be an injustice in me not to acknowledge my obligations to the learned writer I have just mentioned, for having pointed out to me, in the first instance, many valuable authorities, to which, however my own reading has, in general, afterwards conducted me. As, on one hand, I have neglected many authorities he has produced, so, on the other, I have availed myself of many others, which have been brought to light since his time. The plan of defence, as I may call it, or the mode of arguing from established facts, which I have adopted, is certainly original, and, I hope, is perspicuous: should it also prove successful, the particular satisfaction, which, I conceive, your Lordship will derive from seeing the celestial Patron

tron of the learned Society, over which you
preside, and the Saint of your own name
vindicated, will afford an additional plea-
sure to,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most faithful and humble Servant,

Winchester,
April 15, 1792.

JOHN MILNER.

I am

men of the learned Society, over which you
preside, and the Saint of your own name
vindicated, will afford an additional plea
sure to

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most faithful and humble servant,

Wm. Pitt

April 15. 1797

JOHN MURPHY



